

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

Volunteer Newsletter

May 2015



What's New?

Once again, we say goodbye to another valued member of Bear River staff. Rich Iwanski, engineer extraordinaire, is retiring after 32 years of hard work as a Professional Wage Grade Engineering Equipment Operator. He arrived to Bear River on July 1, 1991 to help rebuild the refuge from the ground up after the great floods of the 80's decimated everything. He has made a huge impact not only here, but also on Refuges across Region 6 as he lead the Maintenance Action Teams. Rich has worked on hundreds of projects. Most notably, building the prototype for our water control structures. He has always been dedicated to the resource and will be greatly missed! His valuable skills and vast knowledge will be a great loss to the Refuge and staff. We wish Rich a happy retirement!

What's Happening at the Wildlife Education Center?

Have you seen the black flagged poles out back of the WEC? These were placed by Sara, our SCA biotech. She is doing secretive marsh bird surveys— never attempted before on the Refuge. The purpose of the survey is to establish an annual survey route, identify and estimate numbers of secretive birds and establish an annual record of breeding season counts. She will be listening for Virginia rail, sora, pied-billed grebe and American bittern. This will be a neat addition to the waterfowl and general bird surveys.



The 2015 YCC crew of six will be arriving once again to work June 22nd thru August 14th! Rich, Rod, Katie and Jen are working on building a framework for the last bridge of the Marsh Meander Trail. YCC will finish up the bridge during summer. The completed bridge will make the trail usable at all times of the year.

Biology on the Refuge

Let's talk about birds, grazing, burning and water! We have seen the first goslings of the season and an explosion of nest building occurring all over the Refuge. Some interesting sighting's by our biologist, Howard, and biotech, Sara, have been black-bellied plovers, American bitterns, cattle egrets, spotted sandpipers and Wilson's phalaropes. Grazing will occur on phragmites in units 3I, 3J, 9, 7 and 6, mainly south of D-line. The controlled burns in April were successful and approximately 1,250 acres of phragmites was burned. A follow-up with aerial and hand spraying will be implemented. The Spring rains have helped water levels immensely on the refuge.



Upcoming Events & Volunteer Opportunities



- May 14-16th: Great Salt Lake Bird Festival (GreatSaltLakeBirdFest.com)
- May 25th: Memorial Day — CLOSED!
- May 27-28th: Bird Banner Party
3:30-6:00 pm
- May 30th– Aug. 28th: Summer Saturday Refuge Tours, for reservations contact Andrea at 435-734-6426.
- June 12th: Rich Iwanski's Retirement Presentation. Social hour begins at 6 pm at BRMBR, \$5 per person, presentation begins at 7 pm. RSVP by 05/29/15 to cheryliwanski@gmail.com.
-Please no gifts-

Summer Saturday 10 AM Refuge Tours: May 30th—August 28th

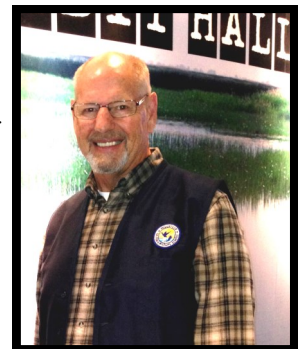


Tours are available to all! This means you, too, volunteers and families. It's a great opportunity to get out on the Refuge and brush up on your birding skills!

There are thousands of birds out on the Refuge, with many getting ready to nest. From American pelicans to white-faced ibis, the sightings are unlimited! Sign up today for a tour by contacting Andrea at 435-734-6426.

Volunteer Spotlight—Craig Stewart

Craig has been a volunteer for approximately one year. Before volunteering at the Refuge, he devoted his time toward various community committees, such as Chamber of Commerce, Box Elder Employer Committee, Brigham City and Box Elder County Economic Development Board. He enjoys bicycling, birding, gardening and restoring old Volkswagens. His wildlife conservation interest sparked when he began observing and feeding backyard birds. Fun fact: He was born and raised in Oregon and makes his own sourdough bread.



Creature Feature: American Bittern

- Bitterns are most active at dusk and throughout the night.
- During the breeding season, the male performs a remarkable courtship walk, displaying white fan-like ruffles raised over his back and shoulders.
- Their unusual calls have earned them many nicknames including: stake-driver, thunder-pumper, and mire-drum.



Bird Jokes:



1. Why did the little bird get in trouble at school?
2. Why do ducks fly south?
3. What bird is with you at every meal?

1. Because he tweeted on his test! 2. Because it's too far to walk! 3. Swallow